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ABSTRACT

As part of an effort to stem an unexpected decline in full-time equivalent students (FTES), San Joaquin Delta College, in California, surveyed students to determine their reasons for taking fewer courses and assess their likely reaction to fee increases scheduled for spring 1993. In fall 1993, 2,329 surveys were distributed to students in morning and evening classes, resulting in 1,676 usable surveys. Survey findings included the following: (1) approximately 40% of the students reported that they were unable to enroll in all the classes they wanted in the current semester, while 68% of these students reported full classes as the main barrier; (2) one-third said they would have to cut back on the number of classes, and 12% said they might have to drop out of school, as the result of planned fee increases; (3) for the 4% of the students who already had a bachelor's degree, and thus were subject to higher fee increases, 38% indicated that they would be forced to leave the college; (4) the total FTE loss was estimated at 1,583 FTES; and (5) students receiving financial aid were less likely to be impacted than the general population. An analysis conducted subsequent to the spring 1993 fee increases indicated that students did not drop out at the rates suggested by their survey responses and that drop-outs were compensated by new student entries which actually increased FTE rates over the previous spring. The survey instrument is included. (KP)

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ED 374 841

RESEARCH REPORT

Student Reactions To Class Cuts and Fee Increases

January 1993
(Revised March 1993)

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OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

SAN JOAQUIN DELTA COLLEGE

Student Reactions to Class Cuts and Fee Increases

Results of a Student Opinion Survey

January 1993

(Revised March 1993)

John W. Evans, Ph.D.

Director of Institutional Research and Planning

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Developing the questionnaire on which this study is based, and analyzing the resulting data, were both made vastly easier and more accurate as a result of specialized software (*Form Pro* and *Survey Pro)* acquired by Delta College's Computer Services Division.

I am especially indebted to Ralph Olstad for his invaluable technical support in adapting the software to the requirements of this survey. The larger result of working through the problems of this pilot case has been the development of an important new survey capability for the College.

Table of Contents

	SUMMARY	4
I	BACKGROUND	5
II	SURVEY FINDINGS	6
A.	Who Had Difficulty Registering?	6
B.	Minority Access	6
C.	Why Students Weren't Able to Register for the Classes They Wanted	6
D.	Differences Among FT/PT, Day/Evening, and Financial Aid Students	9
E.	Financial Aid	10
F.	The Role of Ethnicity	11
	EARLY START	11
	PHONE REGISTRATION	11
	CONCERN ABOUT FEE INCREASES	12
G.	Implications	13
H.	How Students Expect the Fee Increases to Affect Them	13
I.	The Role of Financial Aid	14
	OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE	14
	THE EFFECTS OF ETHNICITY	15
J.	Who and How Many May Drop Out?	16
K.	The Special Case of Students With Bachelor's Degrees	17
	IMPACT ON FTES	18
III	CONCLUSIONS	21
IV	POSTSCRIPT	23
	ENROLLMENTS AND FTES	23
	DID THE FTES GAINS MEET THE CAP?	26
	APPENDIX	29

SUMMARY

Threatened with an unexpected decline in the number full-time equivalent students (FTES) that if not halted could reduce its funding base, Delta College undertook a broad program of corrective steps. One part of this program was a student survey to determine the reasons why students were taking fewer courses, and to assess their likely reaction to the fee increases scheduled for the spring 1993 semester.

While a number of reasons were speculated at the outset to play a major role in students' registering for fewer classes in the fall semester—including concern over the possibility of retroactive fee increases, difficulty with the phone registration system, recession-caused work and financial problems, and being unaware of the early start date of the fall semester—students said the main factor was the unavailability of the classes they needed. This was largely the result of class reductions which had been made previously to narrow the widening gap between growing enrollments and lagging State support.

Overall, nearly half the students said they weren't able to get all the classes they wanted, but this figure was higher for Asian and Hispanic students.

At the time this survey was made (near the end of the fall 1992 semester), students were clearly concerned over the impact that the recently announced fee increases would have on them. A third said they would have to cut back on the number of classes they take, and 12 percent said they might have to drop out of school. This figure rises to 38 percent for the small group of students (about 4 percent of the student population) who have bachelor's degrees and will be subject to the much higher $50 per unit fee.

If all those who said they might have to drop out of school do so, the estimated FTES loss could be as high as 1,583. This is probably too high an estimate since students' initial response to the scheduled fee increases may reflect some over-reaction.

Students receiving financial aid were less likely than other students to say that fee increases would force them to cut back on the number of courses they take, or to drop out of school.

The survey data make clear that expanding the number of classes and seats will be the most effective step for increasing FTES. The College has taken a number of steps to do this. New courses and sections have been added, and instructional agreements with outside agencies are being expanded.

However, a significant minority of students were not able to register for all the classes they wanted because they failed to get necessary information or had difficulty coping with the complexities of the system. Efforts to address these problems include providing more information on available courses and financial aid opportunities, supplying assistance with the phone registration system, and clarifying exemptions for BA students to the $50 fee increase. In addition to increasing classes, these actions are also important in the larger effort to increase FTES, and they should be monitored and expanded as

necessary.

POSTSCRIPT

Neither the regular nor the B.A. students dropped out at the rates suggested by their responses to the fall 1992 semester survey. Apprehensive initial reactions to the prospect of fee increases had apparently moderated somewhat by the time registration for the spring semester arrived.

However, some drop-outs among both the regular and B.A. students were partially compensated for by the entry of new students, not in the student population in the fall, through new contracts with outside agencies.

Because drop out rates were not as high as the students themselves projected, and as a result of the class restoration and other steps the College took to increase FTES, enrollments declined much less in the spring semester than at most other campuses throughout the State, and FTES levels actually increased appreciably over the previous spring.

The substantial increase in Spring FTES was large enough to bring the College's total annual FTES slightly above the funded cap, but it fell short of reaching the cap+5% level necessary for the full supplementary funding for GAIN and Basic Skills.

However, the data strongly suggest that if the various efforts the College made to increase FTES had not been undertaken, it is likely that Delta would have followed the statewide pattern of sharp declines, with the result that it would have dropped below cap and been threatened by a reduction in its funding base.

Moreover, if the decline in property tax receipts persists through remainder of the fiscal year, and Delta's funded cap is reduced, the College could come very close to reaching the cap+5% level necessary for full funding of GAIN and Basic Skills.

Student Reactions to Class Cuts and Fee Increases

Results of a Student Opinion Survey

I BACKGROUND

As student registration came to a close in the Fall of 1992, Delta College found itself confronted with a serious and unforeseen problem--a decline in the number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) that if not corrected could threaten the College's future funding base.

The problem was unforeseen because, like virtually all public colleges and universities in the State, Delta has recently been taking steps to contain enrollment growth. Since 1987, growing enrollments have not been matched by proportionate increases in State budget allocations. The result has been a widening gap between actual and funded FTES.

Since allowing this trend to continue could be financially ruinous, the College took several steps, including class reductions, to bring the number of students being served into closer balance with the number for which State funding is received. For a complex set of reasons, these efforts turned out, unexpectedly, to be too successful.

A substantial drop in FTES for the summer of 1992 resulted when the normal two summer intersessions were reduced to one. The calendar was changed in order to allow for an earlier starting fall semester which would end before the holiday break. While the reduction in summer FTES was expected, it was anticipated that continued high enrollment demand in the fall and spring semesters would more than make up for the loss.

However, headcount enrollment was down in the fall semester, and students registered for fewer courses, resulting in a substantial decline in fall FTES. Some of the suspected reasons were that:

- Some students may not have been aware of the earlier starting date.
- Conflicting statements out of Sacramento suggested that the fee increases scheduled for spring 1993 might be made retroactive. Some students may have registered for fewer classes out of concern they might be presented with a large mid-semester bill.
- Some students, especially non-native English speakers, appeared to be having difficulty with the new all-by-phone registration system.
- Reductions in the number of courses and sections meant that many students were unable to get into the classes they needed.

When the FTES declines from the summer and fall were added together, it became clear that another shortfall in the spring semester of 1993 could produce an annual FTES figure that would drop the College below its established funding base.

When the seriousness of the problem became apparent, President Horton called a meeting of the campus leadership to map out a strategy for raising the spring FTES. The resulting set of initiatives included adding classes, publicizing the availability of financial aid, expanding instructional agreements with outside agencies, improving access to counselors, etc.

In addition, a student survey was carried out to confirm the reasons students registered for fewer classes in the fall semester, and to gauge their reaction to the fee increases scheduled for the spring semester (an increase from $6.00 to $10.00 per unit for regular students, and from $6.00 to $50.00 per unit for those with bachelor's degrees).

This report presents the results of that survey.

II SURVEY FINDINGS[1]

A. Who Had Difficulty Registering?

The principal finding of the survey is that nearly half the students said they weren't able to register for as many classes as they wanted. As shown in Chart A, while a small majority (60 percent) said they were able to register for all the classes they wanted, almost half (40 percent) said they couldn't. This 60/40 break holds for full-time and part-time students, and for day and evening students, with the evening students saying they had a little less difficulty (34 percent).

B. Minority Access

There are, however, larger differences between minority and non-minority students, which may reflect differences in their ability to cope with the system and get all the classes they wanted. As displayed in Chart B, about a third (35 percent) of white students said they weren't able to register for as many classes as they wanted, but this is the case for nearly half (48 percent) of Hispanic students, with Asian students falling in between. Going against the expected majority-minority group pattern, black students had the highest percent who said they were able to register for as many classes as they wanted.

C. Why Students Weren't Able To Register For All The Classes They Wanted

Students cited a wide variety of school-related and financial reasons why they weren't able get all the courses they wanted, but the predominant reason was simply that the classes they needed were full.

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[1]For details on the survey sample and procedures, see the Appendix.

CHART A

Percent Of Students Who Said They Were Or Were Not Able To Enroll In As Many Classes As They Wanted In The Fall Semester, 1992

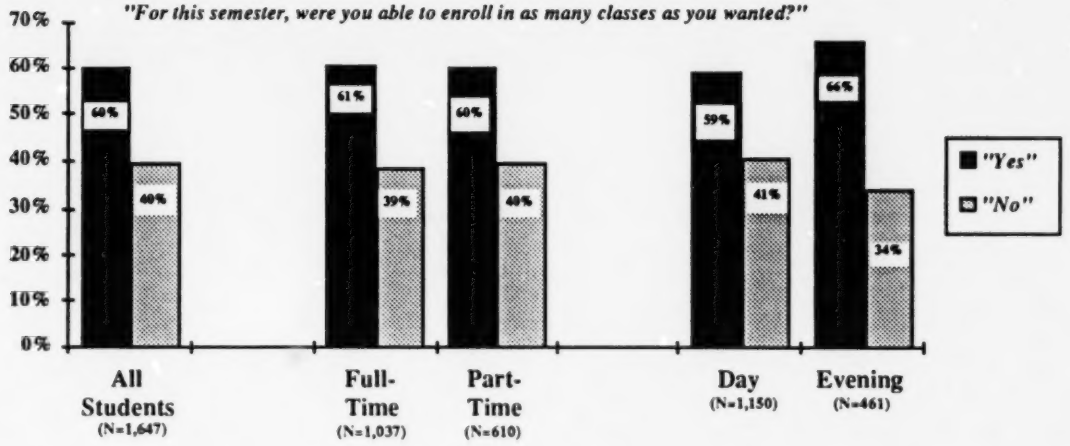


CHART B

Percent of Students Who Said They Were or Were Not Able to Enroll in as Many Classes as They Wanted in the Fall Semester, 1992, by Ethnicity

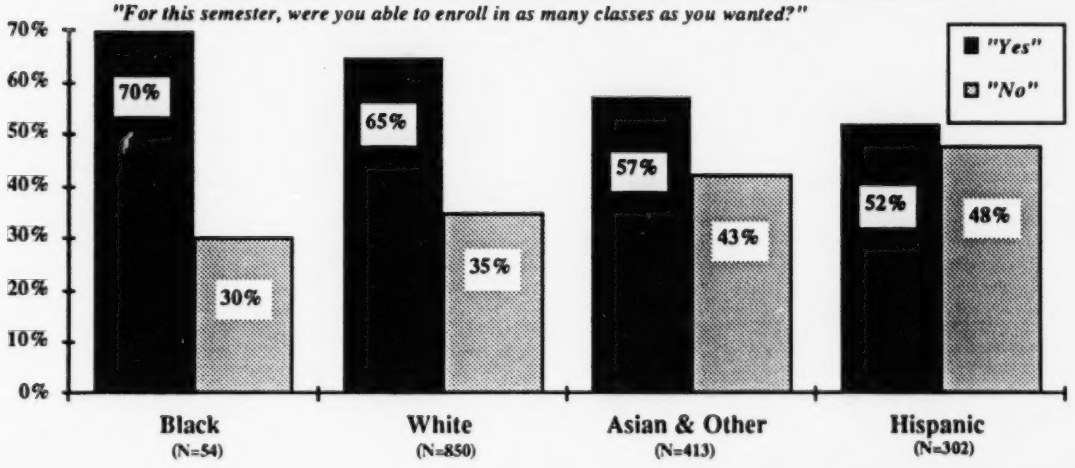


Table 1 displays the students' ratings, on a scale of "Very Important" to "Not Important," of various reasons why they weren't able to register for all the courses they wanted. Chart C summarizes the data in Table 1 by extracting just the "Very Important" ratings.

Reasons related to class access predominate by wide margins over personal and financial conditions. Sixty-eight percent of the students who said they weren't able to get all the classes they wanted said that full classes was a "very important" reason. Similarly, 53% said not being able to get classes at a convenient time was also a very important reason.

By comparison, only about a quarter of the students said that being short of funds and having to work more hours (during the current recessionary period) were very important reasons why they registered for fewer courses.

TABLE 1

Students' Ratings of the Importance of Various Reasons for Not Being Able to Enroll in as Many Classes as They Wanted, Fall 1992 (N=626)

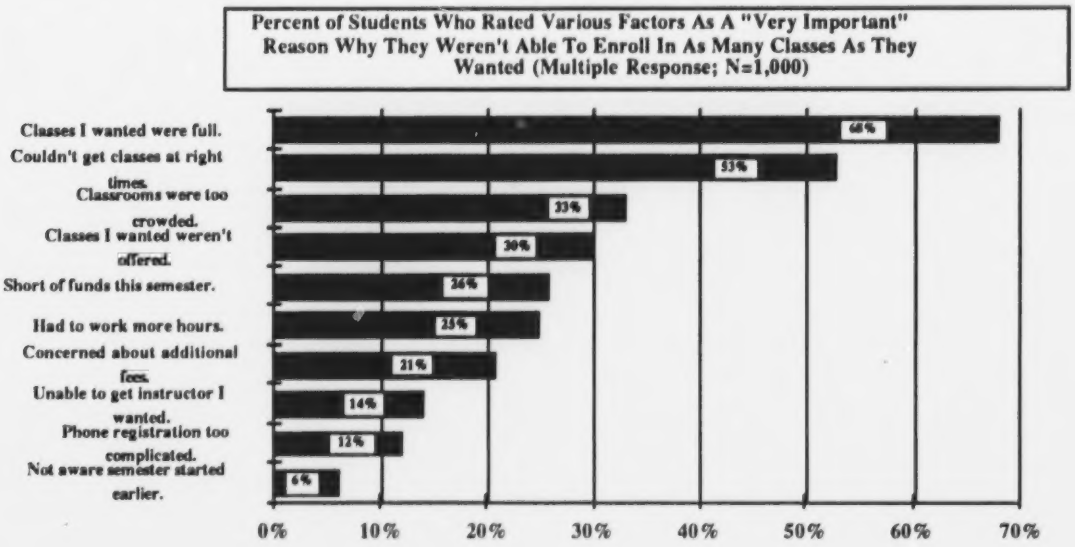
"IF your were NOT able to enroll in as many classes this semester as you wanted, please indicate how important each of the following reasons was in preventing you from enrolling in as many classes as you wanted."

	Very Important	*Moderately Important*	*Not Important*
A. Classes I wanted were full.	68%	15%	17%
B. Couldn't get classes at times I could take them.	53%	28%	19%
C. Classroom was too crowded.	33%	25%	43%
D. Classes I wanted weren't offered.	30%	24%	45%
E. Short of funds this semester.	26%	22%	52%
F. Had to work more hours this semester.	25%	30%	45%
G. Concerned about additional fees.	21%	23%	56%
H. Unable to get instructor I wanted.	14%	24%	62%
I. Telephone registration is too complicated.	12%	15%	73%
J. Not aware that semester started earlier.	6%	14%	81%

At the bottom of the ranking, complexity of telephone registration and not being aware the semester started early were said to be very important reasons by only 12 percent and 6 percent of the students, respectively.

In assessing these reasons that seemingly are much less important to the students in accounting for why they weren't able to register for all the classes they wanted, it is necessary to keep in mind that, even though these reasons are cited by *proportionally* few students, their absolute numbers can be crucial in any effort to restore FTES to a satisfactory level.

CHART C



D. Differences Among Full-Time/Part-Time, Day/Evening, and Financial Aid Students

Day students and full-time students had more difficulty with the problem of full classes than did evening and part-time students. (Charts D and E)

CHART D

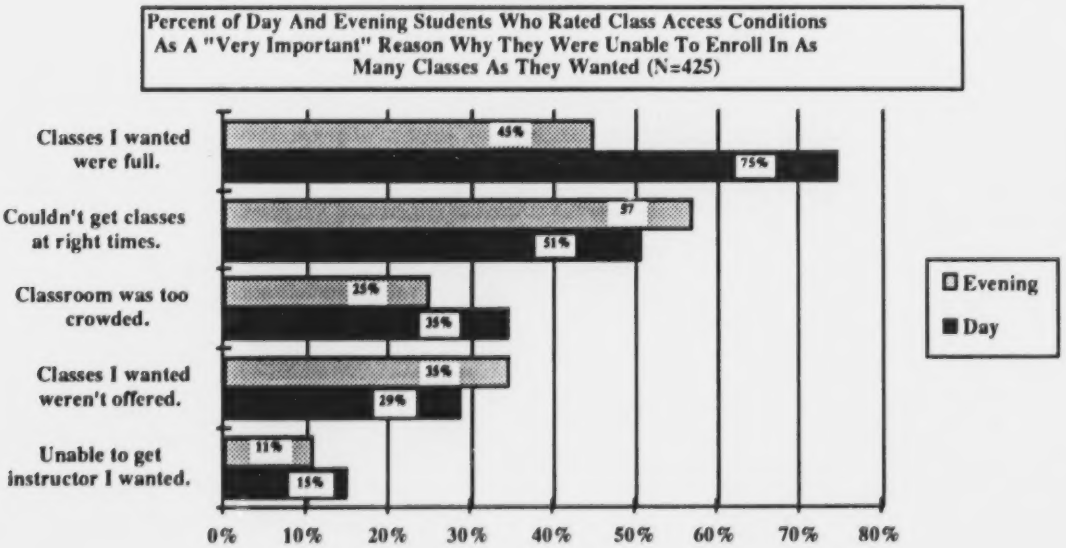


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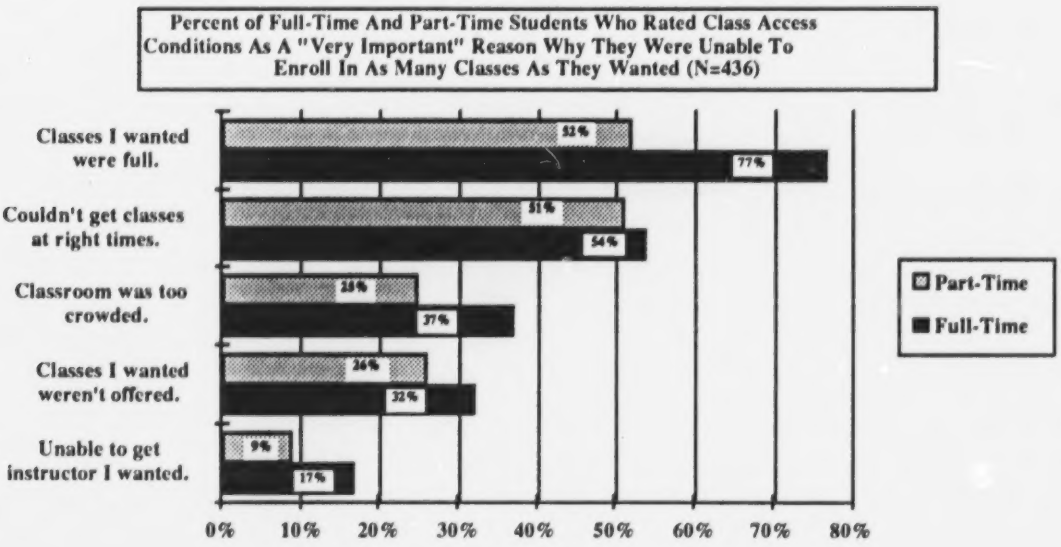
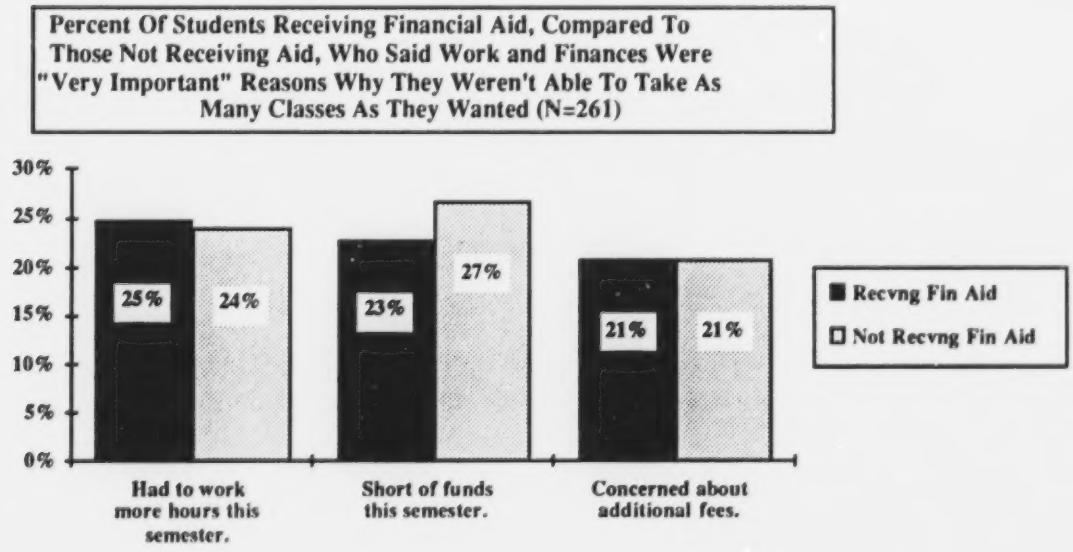
CHART E



E. Financial Aid

Receiving financial aid has an important effect on students' views of the monetary pressures that could affect their participation in school. While students receiving financial aid are, as a group, clearly in more stringent fiscal circumstances than those not receiving aid, they are not more likely to be concerned about the disruptive effects of additional fees, they do not report having to work more hours, and they are slightly less likely to report being short of funds. (Chart F)

CHART F



F. The Role of Ethnicity

We noted above that some of the personal and financial conditions which, at the outset, were thought might be major reasons why students registered for fewer classes turned out not to be major factors for the majority. Being unaware that the fall semester started early, having difficulty with the phone registration system, and concern over the possibility of retroactive fee increases were cited by far fewer students than the class access reasons.

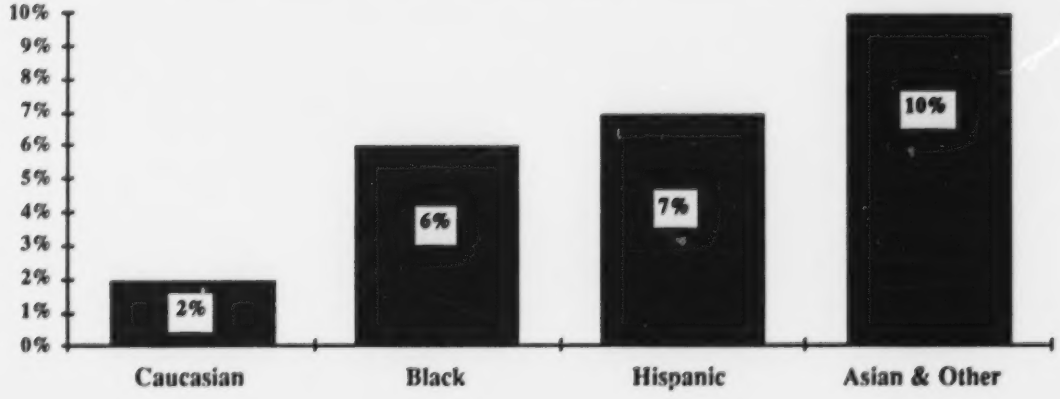
Nevertheless, these personal and financial reasons were cited much more frequently by minority students, as indicated in Charts G, H, and I.

EARLY START

While only 2 percent of the white students said that not being aware the fall semester started early was a very important reason for not getting the classes they wanted, this was the case for 1 in every 10 of the Asian students, and for 6 and 7 percent, respectively, of black and Hispanic students.

CHART G

Percent of Students (Among Those Who Weren't Able to Register For As Many Classes As They Wanted) Who Said That Not Being Aware The Semester Started Early Was A "Very Important" Reason , By Ethnicity, (N=626)

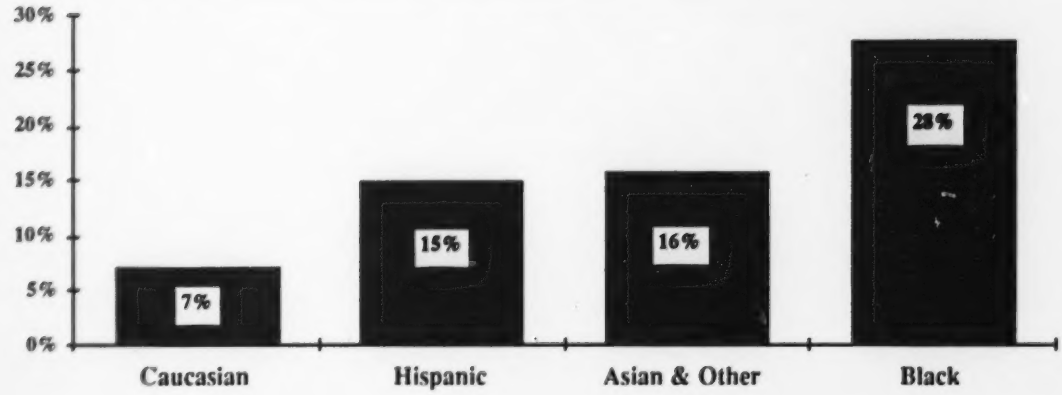


PHONE REGISTRATION

There are similar differences on having problems with the phone registration system. Only 7 percent of the white students cited this as a very important reason why they weren't able to register for all the classes they wanted, but this was a significant problem for black (28%), Hispanic (15%), and Asian (16%) students.

CHART H

Percent of Students (Among Those Who Weren't Able to Register For As Many Classes As They Wanted) Who Said The Complexity Of The Phone System Was A "Very Important" Reason, By Ethnicity, (N=445)

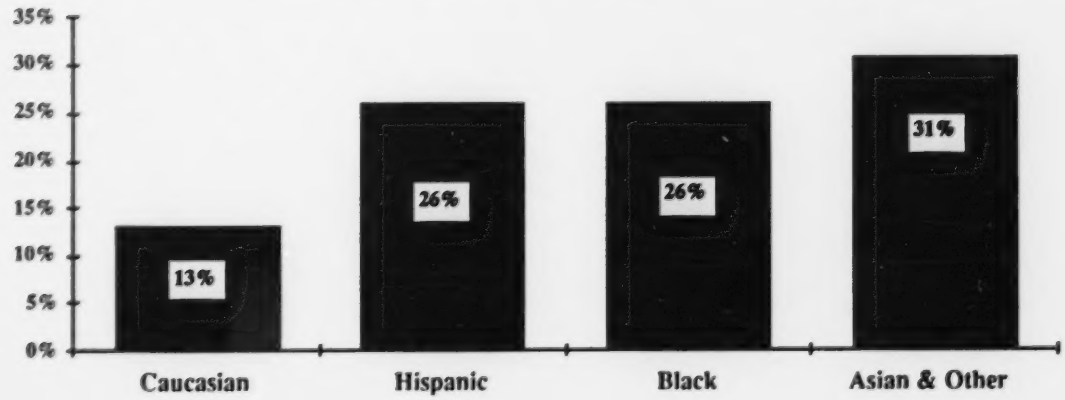


CONCERN ABOUT FEE INCREASES

The same pattern also holds for concern about the possibility of retroactive fee increases. Thirteen percent of white students cited this as a very important reason why they registered for fewer classes, but it was a major worry for one in every four black and Hispanic students, and for nearly a third of the Asian students.

CHART I

Percent of Students (Among Those Who Weren't Able to Register For As Many Classes As They Wanted) Who Said That Concern With Possible Fee Increases Was A "Very Important" Reason, By Ethnicity, (N=626)



G. Implications

Taken together, these findings underscore two important considerations. First, they illustrate the point made earlier that, although these personal and financial conditions are cited by students far less frequently than class access reasons for not being able to get as many classes as they wanted, the absolute number of students affected is not inconsequential in any effort to increase FTES.

This means that developing responses to these problems--getting information out about schedule changes, providing assistance with the phone registration system, and clarifying policies on fee increases--can be potentially effective ways to significantly increase FTES.

The second implication of these findings is that overall trends may conceal important differences among sub-groups of the student population. Few white students indicate much problem with keeping abreast of schedule changes or using the phone registration system, but a significant proportion of minority students do. Minority students, particularly non-native English speakers, are clearly less well tied in to the standard sources of information, and have more difficulty coping with the procedures of formal institutions. Extra outreach and assistance will be required for these students.

H. How Students Expect the Fee Increases to Affect Them

To get an indication of how students are likely to react to the fee increases scheduled for the spring semester, they were asked the following question:

As you may know, community college enrollment fees will increase next semester from $6 per unit to $10 per unit for most students, and to $50 per unit for those who already hold the B.A. or B.S. degree. What effect, if any, will the increase in fees have on your enrollment for next semester? FILL IN AS MANY OF THE BUBBLES AS APPLY.

A. It won't have any effect on me.

B. I will probably have to cut back on the number of classes I take.

C. I may have to apply for financial aid.

D. I may have to drop out of school.

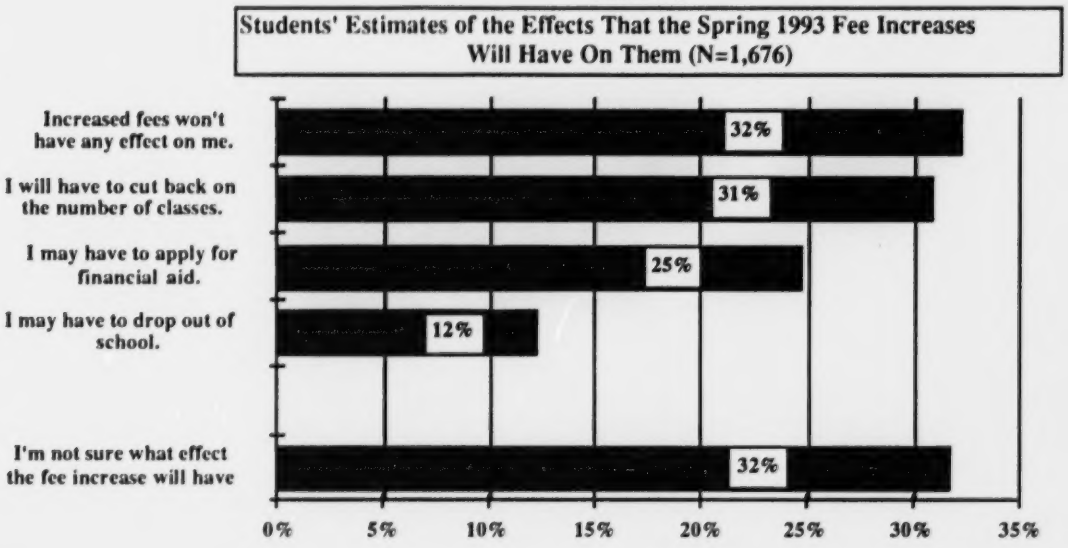
E. I'm not sure yet what effect the fee increase will have on my educational plans.

The responses to this question are displayed in Chart J.

A third of the students say the new fee increases will have no effect on their enrollment plans. But a third say they may have to cut back on the number of classes they take, and 12% say they may actually have to drop out of school. Despite whatever other responses they may have made to this multiple response question, a third say they aren't sure what effect the fee increases will have on them.

Students' initial reactions to the announcement of increased fees are probably not a good basis for predicting their later behavior, but it is clear that many view the prospect of these fee increases with heightened apprehension and uncertainty.

CHART J



I. The Role of Financial Aid

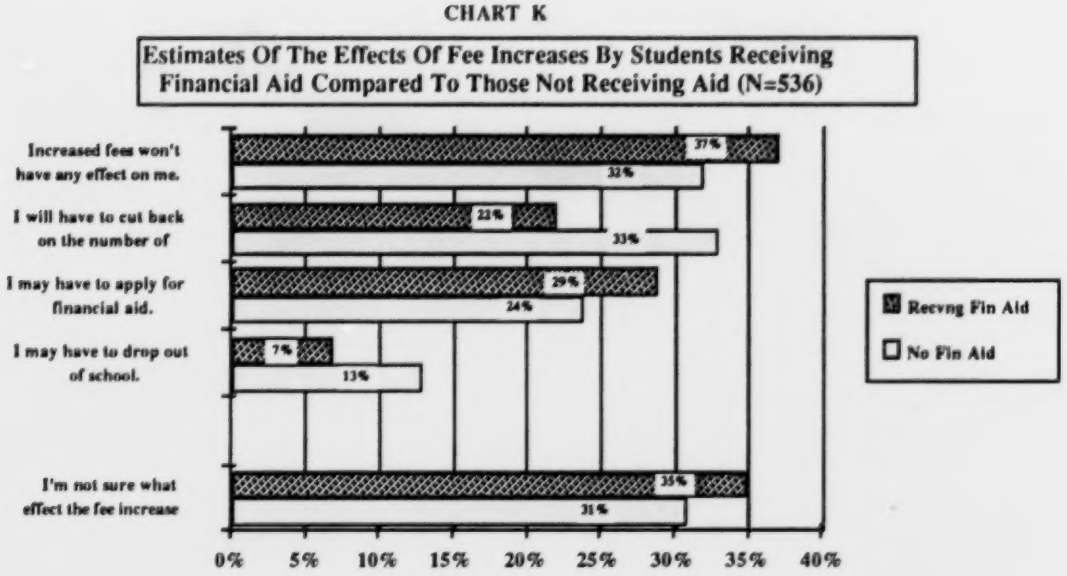
OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE

As we noted earlier in the reasons students cited for not being able to register for all the classes they wanted, those receiving financial aid are not only getting monetary support, they also appear to be given a measure of psychological protection as well. Despite their more disadvantaged financial circumstances, these students are less pessimistic about the effects increased fees will have on them than might be predicted.

As shown in Chart K, compared to those not getting assistance, students receiving financial aid are slightly more likely (37% vs. 32%) to say the higher fees won't have any effect on them.

They are also less likely to say they will have to cut back on the number of courses they take (22% vs. 33%), and less likely to say they may have to drop out of school (7% vs. 13%).

CHART K



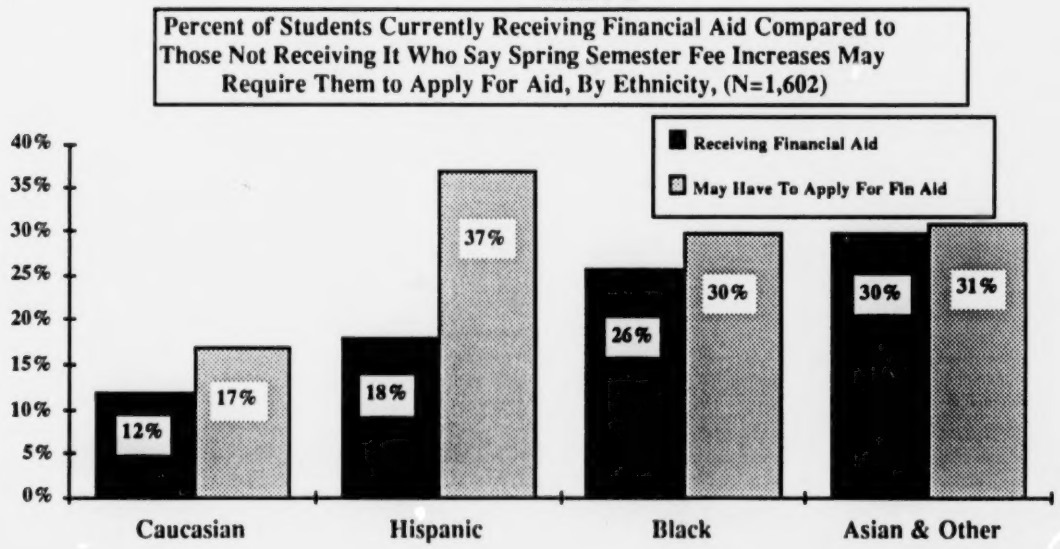
THE EFFECT OF ETHNICITY

Chart L compares the ethnic distribution of students currently receiving financial aid with those who said the increased fees may require them to apply for aid.

There is an expected increase in all groups. However, what is interesting is that Hispanic students, whose level of participation in the financial aid program is lower than might be expected (18 percent, compared to 26 percent and 31 percent for black and Asian students), show a much larger increase in the percent who say the higher fees may cause them to apply for aid.

It appears that the new financial pressures of the prospective fee increases may be sensitizing Hispanic students to the availability of assistance, and that their participation in the aid program may rise to a level more reflective of their eligibility.

CHART L



J. Who and How Many May Drop Out?

When the students were asked how they thought the fee increases may affect them, 12 percent were so concerned they said they might have to drop out of school.

As noted above, these initial, troubled reactions to the prospect of fee increases may not be accurate predictors of later behavior. The semester fees for community college students who do not have a bachelor's degree will increase from $6 to $10 per unit with no cap. This means that the cost for full-time students will go from $60 per semester to $150, an increase of $90. However, approximately one in every five Delta students receives financial aid, and they will have these increases picked up.

But if as many as 12 percent did indeed drop out, it would have an enormously adverse affect on FTES. Fifty-six percent of this group are full-time (15 hours) students. That translates into 1,142 FTES. When the estimated FTES for the remaining 44 percent part-time students (297) is added, the total potential FTES loss comes to 1,439.

The characteristics of those who say the fee increases may force them to drop out are displayed in Table 2. They are more likely to be slightly older minority males, and somewhat more likely to be part-time evening students who are not receiving financial aid.

TABLE 2

Demographic Characteristics of Students Who Said Fee Increases May Force Them to Drop Out Compared to Those Not Planning to Drop Out

	May Drop Out (12%)	Not Planning to Drop Out (88%)
GENDER		
Males	53%	45%
Females	47%	55%
AGE		
<18-22	50%	54%
23-30	26%	21%
31-45	18%	21%
>45	6%	5%
ETHNICITY		
White	42%	54%
Black	4%	3%
Hispanic	27%	17%
Asian & Other	27%	25%
DAY/EVENING		
Day	62%	73%
Eve	38%	27%
FULL-TIME/PART-TIME		
FT	56%	64%
PT	44%	36%
FINANCIAL AID		
Yes	10%	19%
No	90%	81%

K. The Special Case of Students With Bachelor's Degrees

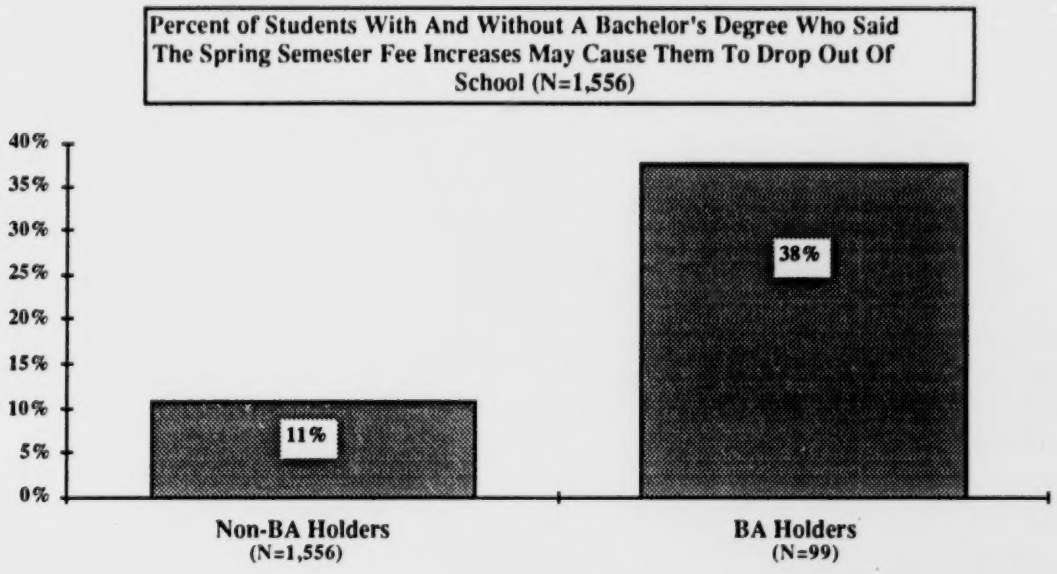
The fee increases which will go into effect in the spring 1993 semester will be much more onerous for students who already have a bachelor's degree than for other community college students, rising from $6 to $50 per unit with no cap. The semester cost for full-time community college students without a bachelor's degree will go from $60 to $150, an increase of $90. But for full-time students with a B.A., the cost will go from

$60 to $750, in increase of $690 per semester. The Chancellor's Office has predicted that as many as 50 percent of these students will refuse or be unable to pay these fees, and will drop out of the community colleges.

Chart M compares the percent of B.A. and non-B.A. students who said the higher fees may cause them to drop out of school.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the $50 fee is going to have a major impact on the bachelor's degree students. Thirty-eight percent of them, compared to 11 percent of the non-B.A. students, say the increased fee may force them to drop out of school. Even if this 38 percent reflects some initial over reaction to the shock of the much higher fee, some substantial attrition in this group seems likely.

CHART M



IMPACT ON FTES

So how big a FTES loss is this likely to produce? It's impossible to predict with certainty since many factors will determine what these students finally decide to do, including the number who learn about and can qualify for one of the four exemptions to the $50 fee (dislocated worker, displaced homemaker, receiving public assistance, or receiving benefits as a dependent of a deceased or disabled veteran). But several calculations may provide at least a hint of the maximum potential FTES loss from this group.

About 4 percent of the student population have a bachelor's degree. This translates into 749 students. Of the 38 percent in this group who say they may drop out, 26 percent are full-time, and the remainder are part-time students. This translates into an estimat-

ed potential FTES loss from the B.A. group of 144.[2]

Planning for ways to reduce the drop-out rate among the bachelor's degree students can benefit from detailed knowledge of their characteristics. Some of that information is provided in Table 3, below.

The data in Table 3 show that the B.A. students:

> Have a slightly higher percent of men than the non-B.A. students.

>Are older.

>Are not much different in ethnicity than the non-B.A. students.

>Are much more likely to be part-time evening students.

>Are less likely to be on financial aid.

[2]Of course, a fully correct calculation, if we could make it, would be even more complex since these figures make no allowances for the unknown number of bachelor degree students who would not normally be returning in the spring, or the number of new students with a B.A. who would be entering for the first time.

TABLE 3

Demographic Characteristics of Students Who Hold a Bachelor's Degree Compared To Those Who Do Not (N=1,669)

	Has BA (4%)	Does Not Have BA (96%)
GENDER		
Males	53%	45%
Females	47%	55%
AGE		
<18-22	10%	56%
23-30	29%	21%
31-45	41%	19%
>45	20%	3%
ETHNICITY		
White	59%	52%
Black	2%	3%
Hispanic	13%	19%
Asian & Other	27%	25%
DAY/EVENING		
Day	29%	74%
Eve	71%	26%
FULL-TIME/PART-TIME		
FT	26%	65%
PT	74%	35%
FINANCIAL AID		
Yes	7%	18%
No	93%	82%

III. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the survey clarified why students took fewer classes in the fall semester, and underscored the extent of their concern over the fee increases scheduled for the spring semester.

While a number of reasons were speculated at the outset to play a major role in students' registering for fewer classes in the fall semester—including concern over the possibility of retroactive fee increases, difficulty with the phone registration system, recession-caused work and financial problems, and being unaware of the early start date of the semester—the dominant factor, according to the students, was the unavailability of the classes they needed.

Although class access reasons predominate, the number of students who said that personal and financial factors were important reasons why they couldn't register for as many classes as they wanted is large enough to be important in any effort to increase FTES.

Overall, nearly half the students said they weren't able to get all the classes they wanted, but this figure was higher for Asian and Hispanic students. It may be that their less developed language and coping skills made the registration and scheduling process more difficult for them.

At the time this survey was made (near the end of the fall 1992 semester), students were clearly concerned over the impact that recently announced fee increases would have on them. A third said they will have to cut back on the number of classes they take, and 12 percent said they may have to drop out of school. This figure rises to 38 percent for the small group of students (about 4 percent of the student population) who have bachelor's degrees and will be subject to the much higher $50 per unit fee.

If all those who said they might have to drop out of school do so, the estimated FTES loss could be as high as 1,583. However, this is probably much too high an estimate. Students' initial response to the scheduled fee increases may reflect some over-reaction. Many will realize that the maximum increase for full-time, non-BA students will be $90 per semester, and that comparable educational opportunities are not available for those costs. Some who are now eligible for financial aid but not receiving it may apply. And some undetermined percent of the BA students, where the projected drop-out rate is the highest, will qualify for one of the exemptions.

Financial aid appears to be serving its basic purpose of improving educational access for economically disadvantaged students. It also appears to confer some measure of psychological insulation from the anxieties of recession and the threat of increased fees. Students receiving financial aid were less likely than other students to say that fee increases would force them to cut back on the number courses they take, or to drop out of school.

The College has already taken a number of steps to increase spring FTES. On the most basic problem of availability of classes, new courses and sections have been added, and instructional agreements with outside agencies are being expanded.

The survey data make clear that expanding the number of classes and seats is where the leverage lies. However, there is a significant number of students who were not able to register for all the classes they wanted because they failed to get necessary information or were not able to cope with the complexities of the system. Efforts are also being made to address these problems. These initiatives, which include distributing more information on available courses, providing more information about financial aid opportunities, supplying assistance with the phone registration system, and clarifying exemptions for BA students to the $50 fee increase, are also important in the larger effort to increase FTES. They should be closely monitored and expanded as necessary.

IV POSTSCRIPT: WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED TO THE SPRING FTES?

Shortly after this report was completed, preliminary data on the actual enrollment levels for the spring 1993 semester became available, making it possible to both assess the success of the College's efforts to increase FTES, and compare students' survey responses about dropping out with their actual behavior.

ENROLLMENTS AND FTES

Chart N displays headcount enrollment comparisons between Delta and the State for three periods: fall 1991 to fall 1992; spring 1992 to spring 1993; and fall 1992 to spring 1993. These comparisons strongly suggest that the College's efforts to increase enrollments had substantial positive results.

In fall 1992, Delta's headcount enrollment fell 9.5 percent from fall 1991 (as a result of the various class access and other reasons noted above). During this same period, enrollment at the other community colleges throughout the State fell, on average, only 1.0 percent.

However, during the following spring semester (the semester for which the College expanded classes and made other changes to increase enrollment), the pattern is reversed. While the State went from a 1.0 percent decline in the fall to an 8.0 percent decline in the spring (as the new fees were introduced), Delta went from a 9.5 percent decline to one of only .9 percent.

In the comparison of the two consecutive (but in many ways not directly comparable) semesters of fall 1992 and spring 1993, the pattern is the same: a much smaller decline for Delta (2.6%) than for the State as a whole (8.8%).

The same pattern holds even more dramatically for FTES (Chart O). Delta's fall 1991 to fall 1992 decline was 4.4 percent compared to only 1.1 percent for the State. But from spring 1992 to spring 1993, while the statewide decline increased to 5.7 percent, Delta actually increased its FTES over the previous spring by 8.7% percent.

The pattern for the fall 1992 to spring 1993 comparison is similar.

CHART N

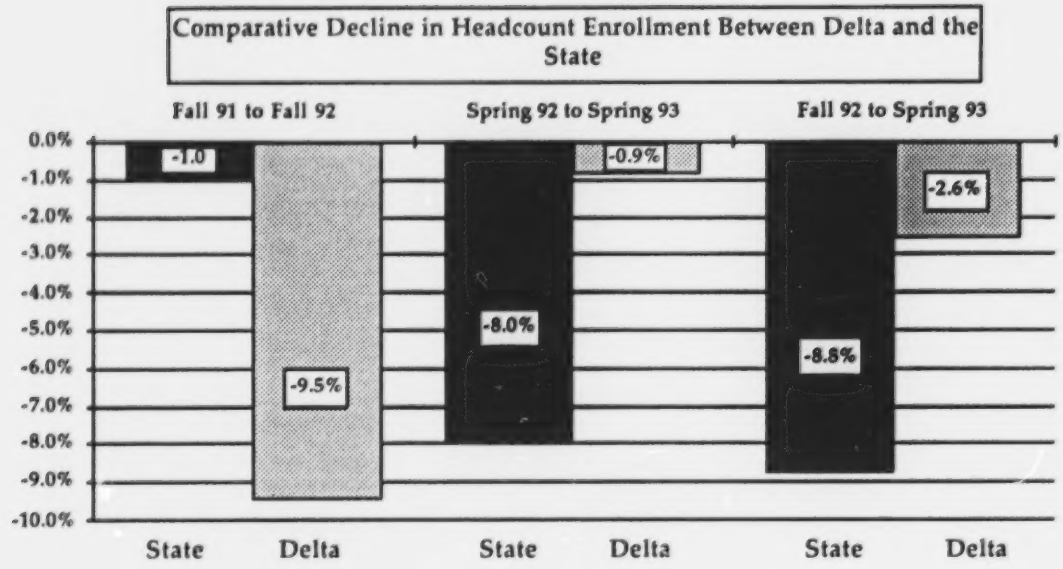
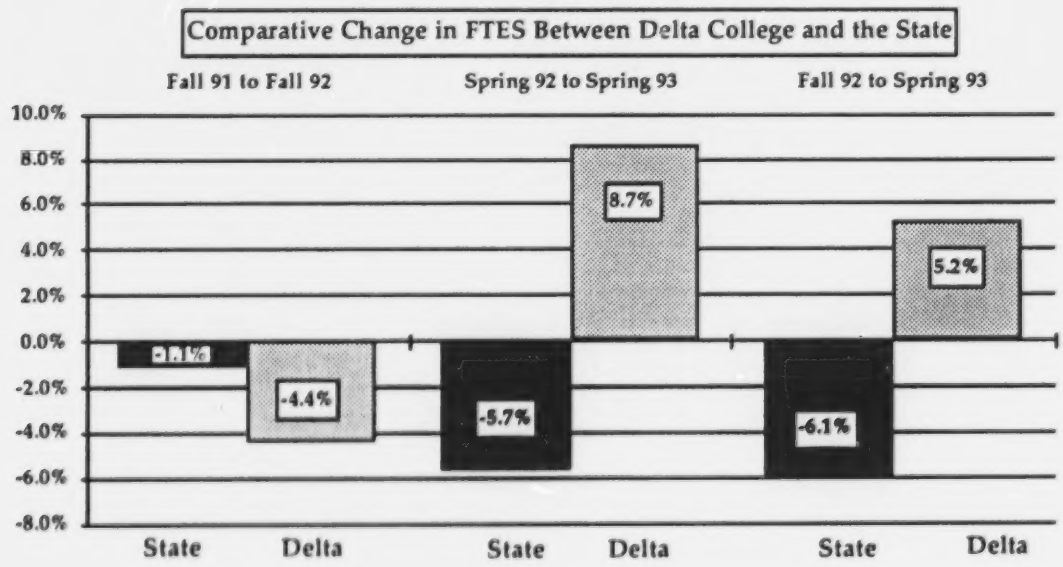


CHART O



DROPOUTS: DID THE INITIAL FEE SHOCK WEAR OFF?

In their responses to the survey made late in the fall 1992 semester, students reflected considerable apprehension about the fee increases scheduled for the following semester. Twelve percent of all students and 38 percent of students with baccalaureate degrees said the fee increases might force them to drop out of school. If this many students did indeed drop out, it would produce a major decline in FTES.

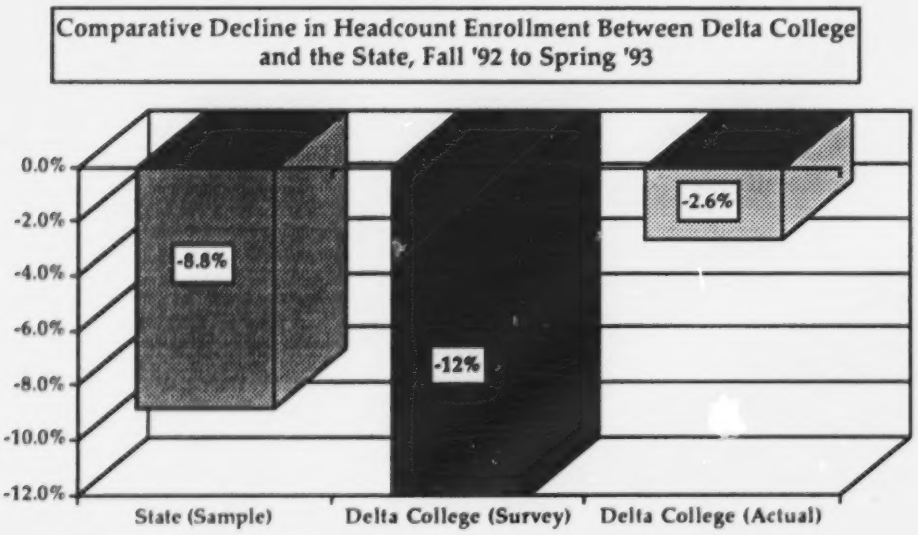
We have already seen (in Chart N) that Delta's spring 1993 enrollment declined far less than that of the State (.9% vs. 8.0 %) , and that its FTES (Chart O) actually increased while that of the State declined (10.8% vs. -5.7%). *However, a substantial portion of that FTES gain was the result of increasing contracts with outside agencies, or in effect "expanding the market."* Some of these increases could be compensating for and masking drop outs among the regular students.

It is not possible at this time to sort out these countervailing factors, but it is informative, nevertheless, to compare the fears expressed in the fall survey with the actual enrollments.

Chart P compares the percent of students who said in the survey they might have to drop out of school (12%) with the actual enrollment decline from fall 1992 to spring 1993 (2.6%). The statewide enrollment decline (8.8%) is also shown.

Although there are many counterbalancing forces that normally go into producing a net increase or decrease between the fall and spring semesters, it seems unlikely that, despite their initial concerns, 12 percent of the students dropped out. As noted above, this figure doubtless reflects some over reaction to the threats and uncertainties that the just announced fee increases posed.

CHART P

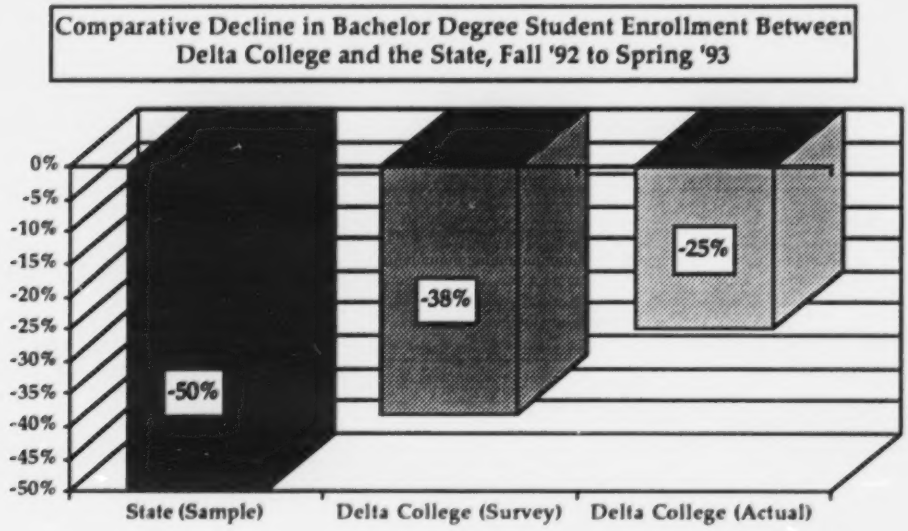


The same holds for the B.A. students, who faced a much higher fee increase. As shown in Chart Q, while 38 percent of them said in the fall semester survey that the fee increase might force them to drop out of school, the percent of B.A. students in the Delta College student population declined by only 25 percent. This compares with a 50 percent decline throughout the State as a whole.

Again, the survey responses appear to reflect some initial over reaction to the announced fee increases. Although the 25 percent decline is substantial, it is less than the survey results predicted, and much less than was experienced on most other campuses.

However, as with the smaller than expected drop in regular student enrollment, the comparatively smaller decline in B.A. students may be partly attributable to the higher percent of students with baccalaureate degrees in the new outside contract classes.

CHART Q



DID THE FTES GAINS MEET THE CAP GOALS?

In initiating a broad set of efforts to increase the spring 1993 FTES, the College had two goals: first, to bring the total annual 1992-93 FTES up to the funded cap, and thereby eliminate any threat to the school's funding base; and second, if possible, to bring the annual FTES level up to cap+5% in order to receive the maximum funding for GAIN and Basic Skills.

Table 4 and Chart R compare the actual FTES levels for both 1991-92 and 1992-93 with the cap and cap+5%. The 8.7 percent increase achieved in the spring brought the 1992-93 annul FTES up to a level that exceeded cap by 1.7 percent, but it fell short of cap+5% by 443 or 3.2 percent.

However, the current fiscal indications suggest that lower-than-expected property tax receipts could result in a 2.8 percent reduction in the College's funded cap. This situation may or may not hold through the end of the fiscal year. But if it does, the result would be that Delta would come very close to reaching the cap+5% level necessary to qualify for full funding of GAIN and Basic Skills. (Chart S)

Table 4

COMPARATIVE FTES AND CAP LEVELS FOR 1991-92 AND 1992-93

	FTES Summer	FTES Fall	FTES Spring	FTES Total	Cap	% Over Cap	Cap+5%	% Over Cap+5%
1991-92	1,488	6,376	5,905	13,769	13,009	5.8%	13,659	0.8%
1992-93	998	6,098	6,416 *	13,512	13,290	1.7%	13,955	-3.2%
Change	-32.9%	-4.4%	8.7%	-1.9%	2.2%			

*Estimated

		If cap is lowered to reflect 2.8% property tax deficit:	
Needed in Spring '93 to = Cap+5%	6,859	Revised Cap+5%	13,563
Actual Spring '93	6,416	Annual FTES	13,512
Shortfall	-443 (-6.5%)		-51 (-.4%)

CHART R

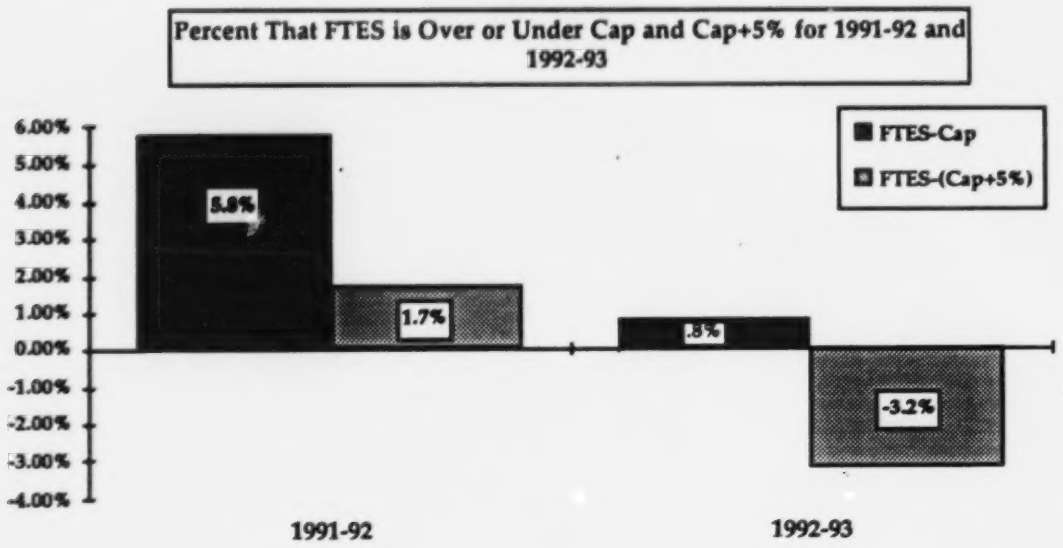
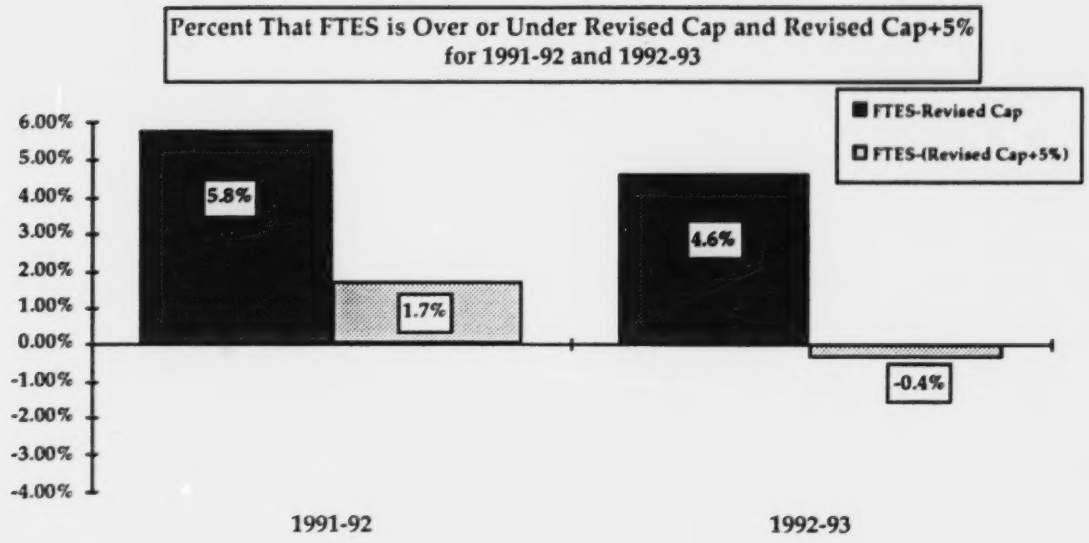


CHART S



FTES SUMMARY

Neither the regular nor the B.A. students dropped out at the rates suggested by their responses to the fall 1992 semester survey. Apprehensive initial reactions to the prospect of fee increases had apparently moderated somewhat by the time registration for the spring semester arrived.

However, some drop-outs among both the regular and B.A. students were partially compensated for by the entry of new students, not in the student population in the fall, through new contracts with outside agencies.

Because drop out rates were not as high as the students themselves projected, and as a result of the class restoration and other steps the College took to increase FTES, enrollments declined much less in the spring semester than at most other campuses throughout the State, and FTES levels actually increased appreciably over the previous spring.

The substantial increase in Spring FTES was large enough to bring the College's total annual FTES slightly above the funded cap, but it fell short of reaching the cap+5% level necessary for the full supplementary funding for GAIN and Basic Skills.

However, the data strongly suggest that if the various efforts the College made to increase FTES had not been undertaken, it is likely that Delta would have followed the statewide pattern of sharp declines, with the result that it would have dropped below cap and been threatened by a reduction in its funding base.

Moreover, if the decline in property tax receipts persists through the remainder of the fiscal year, and Delta's funded cap is reduced, the College could come very close to reaching the cap+5% level necessary for full funding of GAIN and Basic Skills.

APPENDIX

The survey for this report was carried out in late November and early December 1992, using the attached questionnaire.

SAMPLE

In order to obtain approximately 2,000 completed questionnaires, a current roster of all classes meeting at 9:30 am and 7:00 pm was run. This roster provided the number of students in each class, which in turn provided the basis for choosing every Nth class in order to achieve the desired sample size.

The required number of questionnaires and No. 2 pencils were distributed to the 64 selected instructors who were asked to administer the questionnaires in their classes. Sixty-two of the 64 instructors administered and returned the questionnaires. Of the 2,329 questionnaires which were distributed, 1,676 were completed and returned. The difference of 653 (28%) was due to a combination of incorrect class sizes on the roster (many classes had fewer than the indicated number of students), and absence on the days of the survey.

The resulting sample was closely representative of the Delta College student population see (Table 5).

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire for this survey utilized a set of special software programs which allowed for easier administration and data analysis. *Form Pro* makes it possible to develop a scannable form on plain paper. This enables subjects to mark their responses directly on the questionnaire, and thereby eliminates the separate answer sheet and the inconvenience, errors, and lower response rate that frequently go with it.

Survey Pro is an analysis program that rapidly provides item means, total scores, and a full range of content item and demographic sub-breaks of the analyst's choice. The resulting data can be readily exported into other spreadsheet, graphics, or data base applications.

TABLE 5

Demographic Characteristics of the Student Survey Sample and the Student Population, Fall 1992

	Student Population (N=17,189)	Survey Sample (N=1,676)	Difference
Gender			
Male	44%	46%	2%
Female	56%	54%	-2%
Age			
<18-22	42%	54%	12%
23-30	21%	21%	0%
31-45	27%	21%	-6%
>46	9%	4%	-5%
Ethnicity			
White	52%	53%	1%
Hispanic	19%	19%	0%
Asian & Other	23%	26%	3%
Black	6%	3%	-3%
Receiving Financial Aid			
Yes	22%	18%	-4%
No	78%	82%	4%
Have a BA/BS Degree			
Yes	3%	6%	3%
No	97%	94%	-3%

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This fall, total enrollment at Delta College is up ten percent, but on average students are taking fewer courses. The College is trying to find out why.

Will you please help us by answering this short questionnaire? Don't sign your name. The questionnaire is anonymous. Thanks for your assistance.

L. H. Horton, Jr.
Superintendent/President

PLEASE USE A NO. 2 PENCIL, NOT A PEN, TO FILL IN THE BUBBLES.

1. For this semester, were you able to enroll in as many classes as you wanted?

   Yes ○

   No ○

If you answered YES, please go to question #3.

If you answered NO, please answer question #2. Then go on to question #3.

2. IF you were NOT able to enroll for as many classes this semester as you wanted, please indicate how important each of the following reasons was in preventing you from taking as many classes as you wanted.

REASONS PREVENTING YOU FROM ENROLLING IN AS MANY CLASSES AS YOU WANTED THIS SEMESTER:	Not an Important Reason	A Moderately Important Reason	A Very Important Reason
A. The classes I wanted were full.	○	○	○
B. The classes I wanted weren't offered.	○	○	○
C. I couldn't get the classes I wanted at the times I could take them.	○	○	○
D. I was unable to get the instructor I wanted.	○	○	○
E. The classroom was too crowded.	○	○	○
F. The telephone registration system is too complicated.	○	○	○
G. I was not aware that the semester started earlier than usual.	○	○	○
H. It has been necessary for me to work more hours this semester.	○	○	○
I. I'm short of funds this semester, so I had to register for fewer classes.	○	○	○
J. With all the talk about fee increases, I was concerned that I might be billed for additional fees in the middle of the semester.	○	○	○

K. Any other reasons you couldn't enroll in as many classes this semester as you would like?

3. As you may know, community college enrollment fees will increase next semester from $6 per unit to $10 per unit for most students, and to $50 per unit for those who already hold a B.A. or B.S. degree. What effect, if any, will the increase in fees have on your enrollment for next semester? FILL IN AS MANY OF THE BUBBLES AS APPLY.

A. ○ It won't have any effect on me.

B. ○ I will probably have to cut back on the number of classes I take.

C. ○ I may have to apply for financial aid.

D. ○ I may have to drop out of school.

E. ○ I'm not sure yet what effect the fee increase will have on my educational plans.

4. Gender: Male ○ Female ○

5. Age: Under 18 ○ 18-22 ○ 23-30 ○ 31-45 ○ 46-65 ○ Over 65 ○

6. Ethnicity:

Caucasion ○ African American ○ Hispanic ○ Asian ○ Filipino ○ American Indian ○ Other ○

7. At Delta College, are you:mainly:

○ A day student.

○ An evening student.

8. At Delta College, are you usually a:

○ Full-time student.

○ Part-time student.

9. Are you presently receiving financial aid?

○ Yes

○ No

10. Do you already have a baccalaureate (BA or BS) degree?

○ Yes

○ No

Thanks for filling out this questionnaire. The results will be published as soon as they are available.